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BAY AREA ENHANCED AREA PROGRAM QUESTIONS and ANSWERS for SMOG CHECK STATIONS

Bay Area Enhanced Program

Question: Is the San Francisco Bay Area going to become an Enhanced Area?

Answer: Yes. AB 2637 (Cardoza), recently signed into law, requires the Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) to implement the Enhanced Smog Check Program in the San Francisco Bay Area. The most significant changes will be that Smog Check stations in the Bay Area will inspect vehicles using BAR-97 loaded-mode test equipment and a portion of the vehicles will be directed to test-only stations for their inspections.

Note: A list of the affected [Zip Codes](#) and other information regarding this Program can be found by clicking the [Bay Area Enhanced Areas](#) link at www.smogcheck.ca.gov.

Question: Will Smog Check stations in the Bay Area have to purchase BAR-97 inspection equipment?

Answer: Yes. Smog Check stations throughout most of the Bay Area will be required to purchase certified BAR-97 Emissions Inspection Systems (including a dynamometer) to continue performing Smog Check inspections and repairs.

Question: When is the Enhanced Program supposed to start in the Bay Area?

Answer: BAR plans to phase-in the implementation dates, so stations will need to begin testing vehicles using a BAR-97 platform by **July 1, 2003**. Dynamometer-based testing will be phased in within 90 days of that date. Stations that do not have the required equipment by the established dates will be electronically locked out and prevented from testing vehicles.

Question: What if I already have a BAR-97 platform?

Answer: Check with the equipment manufacturer to determine what needs to be done to upgrade your equipment to meet the applicable standards, including the installation of a dynamometer.

Question: Will BAR direct vehicles to Test-Only stations in the Bay Area? If so, when?

Answer: Yes. The test-only component of the Smog Check Program is part of AB 2637. AB 2637 requires BAR to gradually implement the Enhanced Program in the Bay Area. So, BAR will begin directing vehicles to Test-Only stations as the number of those stations increase. BAR will gradually increase the number of directed vehicles in the Bay Area so that they match the percentage of vehicles being directed in other Enhanced Areas of California.

Question: Will there be special tailpipe emission standards (cutpoints) for Bay Area vehicles?

Answer: Yes, initially. AB 2637 requires BAR to phase in Oxides of Nitrogen (NOx) cutpoints. The NOx cutpoints will gradually become more stringent so that they are the same as the cutpoints used in other Enhanced Areas of California.

Question: Will Smog Check technicians have to upgrade their licenses to perform inspections in Enhanced Areas?

Answer: Yes. However, some technicians may already meet part or all of the upgrade requirements. Technicians with a current Basic Area Technician (EB) license will need to apply for an Advanced Technician (EA) license and pass the EA license examination. To apply for an EA license, a technician with a current EB license must have completed the following BAR-certified training courses:

- Electrical/Electronic Systems within the last 5 years. (Current ASE certification in category A6 may be substituted.)
- Engine Performance within the last 5 years. (Current ASE certification in category A8 may be substituted.)
- Advanced Engine performance within the last 5 years. (Current ASE certification in category L1 may be substituted.)
- Advanced Clear Air Car Course completed within the last 24 months.
- OBD-II Update Course completed within the last 24 months.

Question: Will BAR need to visit my station after the dynamometer is installed?

Answer: Yes. After the dynamometer is installed at your station, please call your local BAR field office for a station initialization inspection.

Smog Check Inspection Procedures and Inspection Equipment

Question: Will On-Board Diagnostic (OBD) tests replace the traditional Smog Check exhaust emission inspection currently performed in Smog Check stations?

Answer: Current law requires Smog Check stations to conduct loaded-mode dynamometer tests in enhanced areas (section 44012 of the Health and Safety Code). Thus, both the OBD check and the dynamometer-based emission test are performed in enhanced areas at this time. The State Legislature would have to amend the law to drop the dynamometer test.

Question: How long will the BAR-97 Emissions Inspection System (EIS) be used in the Smog Check Program?

Answer: BAR estimates that the BAR-97 EIS will remain the required inspection system through at least 2007.

Question: I've heard that BAR is going to require Smog Check Stations to perform low-pressure tests of a vehicle's fuel evaporative control system as part of a Smog Check inspection. Is that true? Will all Smog Check stations need to buy new equipment? If so, when?

Answer: BAR made commitments to the United States Environmental Protection Agency to implement a low-pressure fuel evaporative test in the Smog Check Program and is in the process of researching and testing proposed designs of low-pressure fuel evaporative test devices. At this time, more work needs to be done so that the test and repair procedures can be standardized and the emissions reduction benefits of the evaporative test can be accurately estimated. New equipment may be required for all stations probably in late 2003, but before then, BAR will have to clearly specify the required equipment and the implementation date in regulation. The rulemaking process allows for interested parties to offer their input and have their input considered before a regulation is adopted.

Other Smog Check Program Issues

Question: Does AB 2367 repeal the 30-year rolling rule exemption?

Answer: No. As provided in current law, beginning January 1, 2003, 1974 and older model-year vehicles will be exempt from the Smog Check Program. In 2004, it will be 1975 and older model-year vehicles that are exempt, and so on with each new year.

Question: Are there any other potential vehicle inspection exemptions provided for in law?

Answer: Yes. Section 44011(a)(5) of the Health and Safety Code, in conjunction with Section 44024.5, expresses the California Legislature's intent that low-emitting vehicles should be exempted out of the biennial Smog Check inspection requirement. Consistent with state law, BAR will conduct a pilot program to determine the feasibility of 'clean-screening' low-emitting vehicles from the biennial inspection requirement.